

Tuesday, March 29, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am writing to thank you for never giving up in your fight to restore the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program.

As a mother who has seen the benefits of the program first-hand, I can attest to the value of this program. Nico, my nine year old son attends Naylor Road Private School on an opportunity scholarship and is excelling in his small classes. If Nico were unable to attend Naylor Road, he would have been forced to attend a failing, underperforming school.

I can also attest to the heartbreak of having my daughter's scholarship revoked by President Obama's Secretary of Education. My daughter Nia received an opportunity scholarship in 2009 to attend the same school as her brother and receive the same educational opportunities. But that is no longer the case.

My daughter was one of 216 students who received a letter from Secretary of Education Arne Duncan retracting her scholarship. Suddenly, I did not know where I was going to send my daughter to school. I know that I will not send my daughter to any of the schools in my area. While I have been blessed by emergency, private scholarships to send Nia to Naylor Road with her brother, I do not know if this support will continue.

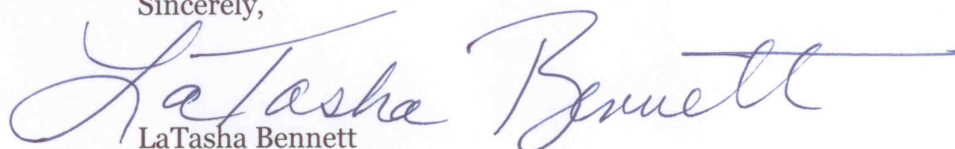
As a single mother on disability, I am unable to work enough to afford tuition. Education is the first priority in my household, and this program allows my children to attend safe schools and thrive.

I can tell you that your work, and that of so many other Members of Congress, has not gone unnoticed in the parts of our city that many people too often ignore.

For me, it will mean a quality education for my children. It will also mean peace of mind, because I will know that my children will not, one day, be separated—my son to attend a safe and nurturing school, and my daughter, forced elsewhere.

Please keep fighting for this program. Please. And I encourage all Members of Congress to follow your lead in voting YES for the SOAR Act. I know that with the chance to thrive in better schools, my children will truly SOAR!

Sincerely,

  
LaTasha Bennett

March 29, 2011

Dear Speaker Boehner,

I want to thank you for spending so much time and energy on a cause that does not benefit you but helps me and a lot other DC children.

I was a lucky one. I had the opportunity to be a scholar and it worked! I was accepted into Archbishop Carroll and Bishop McNamara High School. I'm proud of my success. One day I would like to attend Spellman College. When I get to college I know it will be because of the solid foundation I received in my elementary school. The foundation for my future was possible because of my scholarship.

Again, thank you for fighting to save the Opportunity Scholarship. I know you care about us and I wish you a lot of good luck!

Sincerely,

Samaya Mack  
8<sup>th</sup> grade, St. Anthony Catholic School

March 29, 2011

Dear Mr. Speaker,

My name is Katherine Campos and I am a recipient of the Opportunity Scholarship. I am an eighth grader at Sacred Heart School and have received the scholarship for the past six years.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for introducing the SOAR Act to Congress. I know that you really believe in the Opportunity Scholarship and that means the world to me. I believe in the scholarship, too.

The scholarship has offered me an escape from some of the harsher realities of the city. It has offered me a chance to grow in my spirituality and academics because it allowed my mom to choose Sacred Heart for me. My family is happy now that I have a better chance of getting into a good high school. Without the scholarship, I wouldn't be where I am today and I wouldn't have as much hope for tomorrow. I know that I am better prepared for a successful future because I am a recipient of the Opportunity Scholarship.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for all that you are doing to help me and all the other scholarship recipients. You really do make a difference in my world.

Sincerely,

Katherine Campos  
8th grade, Sacred Heart School

March 29, 2011

Dear Mr. Speaker,

We met for the first time at the State of the Union. Remember you gave me advice on giving interviews? Since then a lot of people have asked me about OSP and I just wanted to say thank you, Mr. Speaker, for all of the hard work you're putting into bringing back this Program. This program has helped me and a lot of other DC children.

Without this program I would not have attended St. Anthony Catholic School and probably would not have achieved the success I have. I love my school and am glad my parents had the option to send me here.

Since we met I am proud to share that I earned a full four year academic scholarship to Gonzaga and will be going there in the fall. This high school scholarship was possible because the elementary school that my parents chose for me provided me with a strong academic foundation. I know I will do well in high school. And then, I plan to do well at Ohio State University for college.

I hope the SOAR Act passes so other kids will get the chance I did. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

Obi Mbanefo  
8th grade, St. Anthony Catholic School